

**VMCTA EXECUTIVE BOARD  
MEETING MINUTES  
Thursday, December 6, 2018  
Barre Town Offices**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** President Donna Kinville, South Burlington; Past President Lucrecia Wonsor, Killington; 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President Georgette Wolf-Ludwig, Fairlee; 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President Tracy Borst, Thetford; Treasurer Audra Girouard, Concord; Secretary Dawn Custer, Hubbardton; Auditor Julie Graeter, Colchester; and Members at Large – Charles Degener, Woodstock; Deb Hawkins, Pawlet; Diane Judd, Holland; and Stacy Jewell, St. Johnsbury

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Tammy Legacy, Roxbury; Priscilla Aldrich, Burke; Sandy Pinsonault, Dorset; and Tim Terway, Vermont Center for Geographic Information (VCGI)

9:33 a.m. – President Donna Kinville called the meeting to order.

**REVIEW AND APPROVE MINUTES OF October 10, 2018**

Georgette Wolf-Ludwig made a motion seconded by Stacy Jewell to approve the minutes of the October 10, 2018 meeting with corrections. All members were in favor. The motion carried.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**A. Tim Terway – Vermont Center for Geographic Information (VCGI)**

Tim Terway of VCGI explained he wanted to learn what clerks and treasurers' thoughts are regarding statewide parcel mapping. It is a project that started seven years ago and became legislation in 2016 under transportation. The intent is to have a mapping standard for every Vermont municipality and allowing that standard to be joined to the municipal grand list. He explained part of his role is to work with the clerks, treasurers, listers, assessors and vendors. The hope is to have all municipalities in compliance with the state standard in two to three years. There are 173 towns done and the remaining 79 towns should be done by December 2019. The projects will make it easier and less expensive for towns to maintain parcel information. He explained he wanted to offer his services to towns by helping them formulate information they may want to have included in the legislation. The intent is to not add a burden to clerks and listers because both are busy. What is being proposed is not for overriding the municipality as a source of land record information but to add access. One item VCGI is looking at providing is digital copies of surveys. A digital .pdf will be sent to the website with the surveyor's number and the information for the municipality where the document is recorded. He explained he also works with the Professional Board of Surveyors and the Vermont Board of Surveyors. The stamped Mylar filed with the clerk is the official document and any copy of that is not cited as an authoritative source. Sandy Pinsonault wondered why the state wanted tax maps suggesting it was to make money from documents kept in clerks' offices. Tim explained VTrans needs a forty-year title history when working on a project. There are other groups needing information as well. What can be done with the information? It can be used by emergency responders and for fiscal analysis of parcel data. With grand list information a per acre parcel assessment can be done. The maps aren't authoritative. It is hoped the grand list process can be streamlined. Municipalities and states have been working on this quite a bit. Documents have a what – what it is – and where – where the document originated and is recorded – assigned to them. Tracy Borst for clarification noted the service is available for free and is linked to the grand list. Some towns have their tax maps available on their websites for free and pay CAI Technologies a lot to get those tax maps. She asked if this service would help to eliminate that expense. Tim responded VCGI does not do CAMA services, they do bare bones - planned view, aerial imagery, you can click for parcel information, get abutter information. It is realized vendors supply different services. Tracy asked if towns would need more information from their mapping vendors to remain compatible. Tim answered no, adding towns would need less information

over time. Georgette Wolf-Ludwig asked where the updated grand list and abutter data would come from. Tim answered Property Transfer Tax Returns (PTTR), line work changes from surveys, possibly new SPAN numbers and boundary adjustments. Lucrecia Wonsor questioned how contiguous parcels would be treated. He explained that VCGI would work with the towns. When there are contiguous parcels someone would click on a polygon for a parcel and the additional parcels would be highlighted. There are also inactive parcel and easement layers. Sandy asked whose responsibility it would be to make certain VCGI received updated surveys. The responsibility would be the surveyors. There is proposed legislation when surveyors send signed and sealed Mylars they also send a digital copy. There will be a disclaimer added to check with clerks for certified copies. Stacy Jewell wondered why CAI Technologies would need to be kept as a vendor. Tim explained for processing assessor updates. Tax maps are not being replaced. Things already mandated to be done are being aggregated. Donna Kinville suggested she is a person looking to purchase property in Dorset, she asked what she would find when she clicked on the parcel she is interested in. Tim replied the forty fields available in the grand list. Stacy asked how this helps VTrans do their forty-year parcel research. Tim noted they would still have to visit clerks' offices to look at the deeds. It will be linked with E-911. When asked what VCGI wanted from the clerks and treasurers the answer was for us to express our concerns. Donna noted clerks and treasurers have been through numerous situations where the state tries to take money away from municipalities and remove controls from the municipalities. The municipalities are still the recipients of all the questions and in many cases, are the middle man between taxpayers and the state. Clerks are cautious and protective of their people. It was noted the state receives more money when providing copies, the state tells the municipality who the residential and non-residential taxpayers are and the municipality cannot change it. Clerks are told to only accept specific PTTR forms and which not to. When a clerk denies the ones, we aren't to accept the state will override the decision. It was asked how VCGI receives their funding for this project. Tim answered part of the funding is received from PTTRs. It was wondered if it is taxpayer funded, is the information free to the entire state. The answer was yes. It was noted municipalities don't trust the state because the state does not work with towns. If the state would make the effort to work with towns they could rebuild a level of trust. Tim noted, from the state's perspective, spatial data doesn't work unless everyone that uses it works together. He noted he would like to work with the VMCTA's Legislative Committee. He added he would like to be given a live venue to show how the system is used. Sandy explained she is the Vendor Chair for the Annual Conference and she would be in touch. Tim was thanked for his time and the opportunity to hear what he had to present.

## **B. Registration of VMCTA with the State**

Donna explained VMCTA's state registration needs to be updated. Sandy noted banks won't allow business accounts to be opened if the business is not registered in the State of Vermont. One hundred forty-five dollars, \$145, is owed. Diane Judd made a motion seconded Charles Degener to reactivate VMCTA's registered trade name with the state. All members were in favor. The motion carried. Georgette noted it needs to be included in the budget, so it won't be overlooked in the future. Audra Girouard wondered which line to take the money from. It was decided it should come out of the Miscellaneous line item.

## **C. Vital Records and Legislative Updates**

The Legislative Committee members have been reaching out to Vital Records requesting that clerks, please, be allowed in the process. Vitals responds it is in their lawyer's hands and they will be in touch. Tanya Marshall, of Vermont State Archives and Records Administration (VSARA) believed Vital Records was already working with the clerks. Carol Dawes, Barre City Clerk, has taken vital records rules and highlighted them with questions. Vitals has their hands tied by lawyers and can't even send out an email without going through their attorney first. Carol is writing a letter of concerns which will be going to the Health Dept.; the Secretary of State; Rep. Maida Townsend, South Burlington; Senator Jeanette White, Windham District; and Heather Shouldice, VMCTA's Lobbyist. Stacy noted an application to apply for a vital records copy hasn't been seen yet. There are questions regarding how long there is to put a request in

the portal, how long do clerks need to keep a request for a vital record with the signature. VSARA will be able to fulfill request if clerks can't. Clerks will have to apply to be an issuing agent. That process has not begun. Heather met with the Legislative Committee regarding the Clean Water Act. There is a push for collecting the fee at the town level and having it included on the property tax bill. It is suggested it be a per acre fee rather than a per parcel fee. Diane wondered what happens when the taxes go delinquent. Stacy explained Heather wants to consider if the fee is collected on the tax bill how it will work. If it is separate bill will the fee be sent to the state as is done for dog licenses. Georgette wondered how much the fee would be. There wasn't an answer. Sandy remembered when the first meeting was held there were one hundred twenty-six ways considered to collect funds for clean water funding including dog feces, putting boats in water, having nails manicured, and haircuts. They wanted to collect \$20 billion over a twenty-year period. When asked what it would cost to maintain the clean water, it was something that had not been yet considered.

As a side note, not on the agenda, changes to tallying write-in votes for statewide offices is being considered. Someone would need to declare they are a write-in candidate. Only those persons who have declared themselves write-ins would need to be listed. Other names voted for could be counted as number of write-ins with the tally total, no need to list each name not declared as a write-in candidate. A point being considered for the change is the waste of taxpayer money involved in listing each undeclared candidate with the number of votes received by each. The Secretary of State's Office will present it to the Legislature. They are also working on clearing up the retention period of unvoted ballots.

#### **D. Proposed Fee Increase**

The Governor is hoping to eliminate the three-year cycle for fee reviews. The intent is to not receive 2000 requests in a single year. Karen Horn, of Vermont Leagues of Cities & Towns (VLCT), sent the fee schedule currently in use by clerks and treasurers. The VMCTA Legislative Committee will be presenting in Montpelier on the third Tuesday in January with the aid of VLCT. Our proposed fee increases need to be accompanied with a justification as to why. It was asked that everyone on the E-Board send an update to the questionnaire sent to clerks and treasurers last year. What is used in books, paper, how many pages recorded, copier fees, etc. It was suggested it would be simpler if the fee was kept at a per page fee instead of different charges for the first page to be recorded and all pages following. Discussion included a per page fee for Property Transfer Tax Returns instead of treating the entire document as a single page. Increases for Mylars was discussed as well. Lucrecia suggested the questionnaire being sent to clerks and treasurers include two-years' worth of data and include software cost, employee time, restoration money spent, paper and book cost, a percentage of the copier cost, vault expansion, number of documents, pages and PTTRs recorded. Stacy noted the fees we are not asking to be increased will need to be reauthorized by the Legislature.

#### **E. VMCTA Annual Conference Scholarship**

Audra Girouard had slips of paper with the names of each attendee at the 2018 VMCTA Annual Conference. Sandy Pinsonault drew the name of the scholarship recipient. The winner of the scholarship to attend the 2019 VMCTA Annual Conference was Jan Perkins, Assistant Town Clerk in Johnson. Secretary Dawn Custer will send a letter notifying Jan she won.

#### **F. Annual Conference Procedures**

Donna Kinville reviewed the protocols for the Annual Meeting. Sandy asked if we own flags adding the Association President should be custodian of the flags. Georgette suggested the Secretary of State and Senator Bernie Sanders offices should be able to provide flags. It was suggested the Pledge of Allegiance be recited at the Business Meeting. Several suggestions were offered. The opening could include a welcome message from the VMCTA President followed by general housekeeping from the Education Committee. The Business Meeting should have a gavel and the pledge would be recited at the meeting's

start. Vendors could be introduced at the Continental breakfast on day one and attendees encouraged to visit their booths. The Annual Meeting should be adjourned by gavel. The vendors could again be introduced the second day for those not attending day one. The cocktail hour could start earlier and be shortened, 5:30 – 6:00 was suggested, so the meals could be served earlier.

#### **G. Town Officers Education Conference (TOEC) Involvement**

Donna informed the Board an email was received asking if a VMCTA member could serve on the TOEC committee so all aspects of government are represented. The pitfalls of involvement with TOEC in the past were listed. It was suggested VMCTA would like to do a collaborative training with VLCT at Town Fair.

#### **H. VMCTA President Donna Kinville Invited to Democracy Fund**

Donna explained to the Board she received an email inviting her, as the state association president, as well as, all state association presidents, to a Democracy Fund Conference in Washington, D.C. Will Senning, Director of Elections, was asked for advice. He offered that he thought it was good they were reaching out and noted they were a bipartisan organization. Talking points about the conference will be sent on the listserv.

### **TREASURER'S REPORT**

Treasurer Audra Girouard reported she had paperwork to set up a Scholarship Reserve Fund. It needs to be notarized and adopted to authorize. Lucrecia Wonsor made a motion seconded by Diane Judd authorizing Audra Girouard and Donna Kinville to sign the necessary paperwork to set up the Scholarship Reserve Fund. All members were in favor. The motion carried. Audra had a \$412.77 warrant for approval. Reimbursements for raffle tickets and the mailing of budget reminder postcards were included. The postcard mailing would be included in the miscellaneous expense line item. Sandy suggested it be included as an Annual Meeting expense. The Board agreed by consensus that was an appropriate line. Lucrecia reminded the Board the website renewal was due in January. The hosting fee is \$200 last paid five years ago. Deb Hawkins made a motion seconded by Diane Judd to approve the warrant in the amount of \$412.77. All members voted in favor. The motion carried. Audra explained the end of year financials were updated because more Annual Meeting items came in.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

#### **A. Discuss and Finalize 2019 VMCTA Annual Conference Venue**

Sandy Pinsonault noted Joe Degnan of Kofile is contacting other states for their annual conference dates to help VMCTA not have vendor conflicts with its conference. Our potential dates at this point are September 12<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup> or September 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> in 2019. Lucrecia Wonsor made a motion seconded by Charles Degener in favor of authorizing President Donna Kinville signing an Annual Conference venue contract once a decision has been made. All members were in favor. The motion carried.

#### **B. Conversation with Vermont Government Finance Officers' Association (VGFOA)**

Donna noted a message was left with the current president of VGFOA to see if training standards could be coordinated with VMCTA. It was believed it would help VGFOA membership.

#### **C. Honorary Members**

Donna reminded the Board the previous discussion about Honorary Members wondered about qualifications needed and who previous recipients were. An Honorary Member receives lifetime membership in the VMCTA. John Cushing was added in 2015. The awards would be presented at the

Annual Meeting. Lucrecia Wonsor made a motion seconded by Georgette Wolf-Ludwig in favor of bestowing Honorary Membership to Pattie McCoy, retired Town Clerk/Treasurer of Poultney and Karen Richard, retired Town Clerk/Treasurer of Colchester. All members were in favor. The motion carried.

COMMITTEE REPORTS – Membership Committee

Priscilla Aldrich reported there are currently 350 clerks, treasurers and assistants who are members – eighty are unpaid. There are 164 towns with paid members out of a potential 250. Applications for vendor members were recently sent and should start being received back shortly.

OTHER BUSINESS

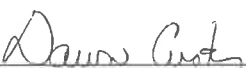
Julie Graeter noted there was a recent discussion regarding liens on MyVTTax. It was wondered who is at fault if they aren't found in a title search. It was suggested the clerk's office would be. A lien received via the tax website is the same as any other piece of mail. It is not checked five times a day just as a mailbox is not checked five times a day. Sandy wondered when the lien notification is received via email do clerks use the date and time of the email for recording time or the time the email is opened. Charles suggested the time it is printed. Donna suggested Karen Horn be informed so it could be included as an item for discussion at the next VLCT meeting.

Friday, February 15<sup>th</sup> is the date VMCTA will be in the card room at the Statehouse – 8:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. Donna stated she would send out an email asking people to volunteer to cover the table for a couple of hours. The memo holders being given out should be in soon.

Tammy Legacy reminded everyone it is time to start planning the next New England Clerk's Conference to be held in Vermont in 2021. Great ideas have been received for the motto.

The next E-Board meeting was set for January 24, 2019 at 9:30 a.m. – Barre Town Offices.

**Adjourn: Donna Kinville made a motion with the Board's agreement to adjourn the meeting at 2:07 p.m.**

Attest:  \_\_\_\_\_  
Dawn Custer  
VMCTA Secretary